

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 01357 242242Z

67

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SAB-01

/068 W

----- 115741

P R 242130Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6847

INFO PANCANAL

USCINCSO

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

UNCLAS PANAMA 1357

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR PINT PN

SUBJ: TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: PRESS REACTION TO FEBRUARY NEGOTIATING  
VISIT

SUMMARY: MEDIA REACTION TO THE FEB NEGOTIATING ROUND HAS  
BEEN LOW KEY AND REALISTIC. ONLY COMMENTARY SO FAR IS IN FEB 24  
CRITICA EDITORIAL; IT TOO OF MEDERATE TENOR. END SUMMARY.

1. FEB 23 PRESS COVERAGE HEADLINED THE COMPLETION OF  
ANOTHER ROUND IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS, BUT ASIDE FROM NOTING  
THE PROLONGED STAY OF THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATING TEAM,  
CONFINED ITSELF TO REPRINTING THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED ON THEIR  
DEPARTURE. THE ONLY ADDITIONAL ITEM WAS CONTAINED IN MORNING  
NEWSPAPER CRITICA'S FORECAST THAT ANOTHER ROUND WOULD BEGIN IN  
A FEW WEEKS--SPECIFIED THE FOLLOWING DAY AS TECHNICAL LEVEL  
MEETINGS.

2. CRITICA'S FEB 24 EDITORIAL WAS AN EXERCISE IN MODERATION  
AND RESTRAINT. ENTITLED "THE NEGOTIATIONS MOVE FOREARD" THE  
EDITORIAL NOTED THE SOBER QUALITY OF THE COMMUNIQUE, ITS LACK  
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PAGE 02 PANAMA 01357 242242Z

OF MENTION OF ANY AGREEMENTS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ADOPTED, AND

PRAISED ITS RESERVED TONE, SINCE, AS THE EDITORIAL REMARKED, "OUR COUNTRY MUST HEW TO A POLICY OF CAUTION AND INTELLIGENCE". CONTINUING, THE EDITORIAL STATED THAT "ALL HASTINESS CAN ONLY CREATE DIFFICULTIES ON THE NEGOTIATING PATH"; RESERVE AND CAUTION DO NOT MEAN NEGOTIATING BEHIND THE PEOPLE'S BACK, BUT INFORMING THEM WHEN CONCRETE UNDERSTANDINGS HAVE BEEN REACHED. WITH THE NEGOTIATING LIMBO OF SEVERAL MONTHS AGO SURPASSED THANKS TO LATIN AMERICAN AND THIRD WORLD PRESSURE, THE EDITORIAL NOTED, PANAMA HAS RETURNED TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE AND NOW COUNTS SENATOR JACOB JAVITS AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE WILLIAM ROGERS AMONG ITS ALLIES IN THE UNITED STATES, AS WELL AS THE SUPPORT OF THE HEADS OF STATE OF VENEZUELA, COLOMBIA AND COSTA RICA.

3. THE EDITORIAL FURTHER STATED THAT "WITHOUT SINNING AGAINST OPTIMISM, WE CAN AUGUR THAT A TREATY DRAFT MAY BE READY BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR", BUT ONCE AGAIN REITERATED THE NEED TO CONCENTRATE ON THAT TREATY WHICH RESPONDS TO THE COUNTRY'S LONGED-FOR ASPIRATIONS, AND NOT TIME NEEDED TO CONFECT IT.

4. ANOTHER POINT IS THAT PANAMA'S NEGOTIATORS ARE PRAISED FOR THE EXPERIENCE, WISDOM, SUBTLETY AND KNACK THAT THEY HAVE ACQUIRED IN THEIR DIPLOMATIC STRUGGLE.

5. IN CLOSING, THE EDITORIAL HOPED THAT ANOTHER "PARENTHESIS OF PATIENCE" IS NOT TO BE EXPECTED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT ADDED THAT PANAMA HAS WAITED 72 YEARS, AND AFTER ALL, S GENERAL TORRIJOS PUT IT, "NO COLONIALISM LASTS FOR 100 YEARS, NOR NO PEOPLE SUFFER IT."  
GONZALEZ

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